

The First Summer by Kiddo7

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Summary: It's the gang's first summer all together, and Mike can't wait to show El all that it has to offer. Mileven, probably gonna be a slow burn because it's going to be a coming of age romance with all the awkwardness that comes along with it. Currently T rated, may or may not change. Please read, review and enjoy!

1. Prologue

Hey guys, so this is just a fun story about the gang going through their first summer all together, really focusing in on Mileven. I don't own Stranger Things or anything to do with it, purely just a fan! So please read, review and enjoy!

Prologue:

When Eleven returned, so did Mike. Not physically of course, he was there for the whole year she wasn't. But those lonely nights took a toll on his mind and heart, just as it did on her. It dimmed the lights in their eyes that didn't spark up until the moment she walked through the Byer's doorway. Their hearts bursting through their chest, tears welling in their eyes. She returned to him, and he returned to her.

Of course not completely at first, it was dangerous enough to let her go to the snowball, and Hopper took his role as her father and protector very seriously. All the boys knew she needed to lay low for a while just to make sure she was safe for good. The gang and hoped that by the summer everything would be completely settled and El could join them in all their normal activities. For Mike those months in waiting were almost worse than when she was gone. Now the anticipation of seeing her again and knowing she wasn't too far from him was pure agony. But of course El and Mike found ways to talk and see each other over those long months. Mike calling on the super-com, El reaching out to him with her mind, and on the rare occasion sneaking out and sitting beneath the stars. As the months passed they bundled up less and less on their late night outings, the warming atmosphere made them both giddy. Summer was almost here. Mike couldn't wait to show Eleven everything summer had to offer, and she couldn't wait to find out. But most importantly they couldn't wait to spend long hours together, not fighting monsters, but just being normal kids.

Summer. Summer was coming, and it was going to be magical.

2. Summer's Eve

Mike stared at the clock, every second ticking by as if the hand was stuck in molasses. His knee bounced anxiously. Five minutes, that was all. Five minutes until summer began, and he could show El the world, or at least the outskirts of Hawkins. Hopper specifically said if they wanted this to happen she had to stay in less public places, which was fair enough. Seeing her at all would be good enough for him. He imagined them riding his bike together, her arms wrapped around him tight, her new curly brown hair blowing in the wind, with the gang trailing behind them. The thought made him smile as a blush rose to his cheeks.

The bell's loud ring made Mike almost jump out of his seat, he scrambled his papers into his backpack and got out to the bike racks as quick as he could. He could hear the boys screaming at him to slow down, but he couldn't, the anticipation of seeing her was overwhelming.

"Mike slow the hell down!" Lucas shouted while he mounted his bike. But Mike was already peddling, spreading the distance between them.

"What the hell has gotten into him?" Max said approaching the boys, skateboard in hand, "I realize it's the last day of school, but he just got out of here like a bat out of hell!"

"He's off to see his girlfriend" Dustin said making kissy faces.

Max followed the boys, skateboarding gracefully. She was watching Mike, him peddling faster than she imagined his skinny legs could handle. She knew who they were going to see of course. He glanced at Lucas, and then back at Mike. She couldn't imagine someone rushing and being so elated to see her. She knew why Eleven, or El as the boys called her didn't like her, she's never seen another girl around Mike, and that scared her. This girl who could kill a man with the tilt of her head was scared of her, plain old Max. This also helped her understand why Mike didn't like her either. He didn't want another girl in their party because there was room for only one girl, El. She said a secret prayer that she would be able to ease the tension

and that by mid-summer they would be one big group, with no hard feelings.

Mike let out a big huff of air, his heart beating as fast as his legs were peddling. Every inch he moved he felt her closer to him. His heart beating against hers, he could practically feel her in his arms. He couldn't get to her any faster. The trees lining the street past in a blur, the wind blowing through his thick black hair. Almost there, almost there, he told himself out loud as he neared the woods. She was here, only a little bit further and she was there.

Mike hopped off his bike and began to run through the woods, the boys and Max followed suit, jumping over branches and avoiding obstacles. He could see the cabin in the distance, growing in every running step he took, a smile never left his face. He hopped over the trip wire like an Olympic hurdler.

"Guys, look out for the..." Mike started to shout, before Dustin clumsily fell flat over it, "trip wire", he said rolling his eyes. The loud sound made them all wince. But what followed was the most beautiful sound, like music drifting into his ears.

"Hi Mike." Her voice was soft, like velvet drifting through the air. He turned around on his heels to see the angel who matched the voice.

Eleven was standing in the door way, an old pair of jeans cut into shorts and one of the chief's old tee-shirts hung loosely around her petite body, she of course had her trusty converse on. Her hair had grown a bit over the last couple months, it now hung in loose curls just above her shoulders. Mike looked at her like he did the night of the snowball. In complete awe.

"H-Hi El" he stammered as she wrapped him into a hug.

He held her tight against him taking her in with all of his senses. It had only been about a week since he last saw her, but it felt like forever.

"You ever gonna let us get a hug too!" Dustin interrupted.

Mike stepped back, his face growing red as he stared down at his

feet.

The boys all took their turns greeting El, Lucas and Will opted for a high five, but Dustin grabbed her into a big bear hug which made her giggle in excitement of seeing her friends. Mike loved the sound.

Finally, it was Max's turn to approach her, she walked up hesitantly.

"Hey Eleven, it's good to see you again!" She said smiling raising one hand in a type of tentative wave.

"Hi"

That was all she could get out of the mysterious girl along with a cold glare. She could feel her anger boiling deep within her, but she did her best to calm it down. This girl never lived a normal life, it was understandable that she wouldn't be as socially adapt as the rest of them, but she wouldn't deal with this all summer. She knew she'd have to get El to warm up to her at some point.

"You guys want to come in?" El asked shyly pointing back at the cabin.

"Yeah, it'd be cool to see where you've been hiding all year," Lucas started, "but I'm sure Mike has seen it a couple of times already." He said winking at Mike.

Mike face, which was already pink from the last comment, blushed again, "I haven't been here!"

"Oh yeah, you always don't answer your super-com when we call you, and it's totally normal for you to fall asleep first period, we all know about your late night rendezvous!"

"What's a ren-dez-vous?" El questioned stumbling over the word.

"Don't worry about it, I'll tell you later, now show us the cabin!" Mike insisted doing anything to get out of this conversation.

The gang followed close behind El making sure to shut the door behind them. The cabin was small, but cozy. The living room and kitchen were all in one room, with a bathroom off to the side, and a

little further down was a door leading to Eleven's bed room. Hopper always slept on the couch, even when living alone, so it was no big loss giving his new daughter her own room.

"You guys want to see my room!" She asked excitedly.

Mike always wondered what El's bed room looked like, smelled like, and even felt like. The room was a reasonable size for the cabin, but was unfortunately dull. It was all wood paneled, with barely any color, he made a mental note to buy her something for her room when he saved up enough allowance. Next to her bed was a night stand with a stack of books Hopper must read to her to calm her down before sleeping. The thing that caught Mike's attention the most was the mountain of pillows and blankets that sat on her bed, it reminded him of the fort in his basement, where she lived for a week almost two years ago. It made him smile to himself, thinking of her, thinking of him.

There wasn't much else to explore, taking the cabin's size into account. Now they had to decide what to do on Summer's Eve. Of course Dustin suggested the arcade, forgetting that El couldn't go there, so the idea was immediately shot down. The next idea was going to the quarry to cliff jump, but Will was not in for that, and knew his mom would have a stroke if she knew he was doing that. After much discussion they decided their best bet was to go to the junk yard and just try to have fun.

"um, you can ride on the back of my bike if you want!" Mike suggested as the gang got on their own modes of transportation.

El smiled sporting those dimples that made Mike's heart beat a little faster.

"Alright, hop on!"

As they started down the road Mike started to realize how much they've grown since the last time they did this. It was still comfortable of course, but they were much more smushed together. He could feel El's body pushed against him, her arms wrapped tight around his waist. The feeling made his breathing a little harder to do, and the butterflies in his stomach go crazy.

El was feeling the same way, she liked being this close to him. She liked being able to smell him, he smelled like fresh laundry, mixed with the sweet smell of his sweat. She assumed it was from him biking to her, and she liked that thought. She wrapped her arms even tighter around him and she felt his breath hitch for a moment. She's missed this, missed him. And the other boys of course too.

"So what now?" Lucas questioned jumping off his bike.

"Well we can play hide and seek!" Dustin suggested.

"What are we? Babies?"

"Well you have any better ideas?"

Dustin covered his eyes and started counting. Much to Mike's liking they decided he would have to hide with El to follow Hopper's rules. El is not to be left alone. Ever. The group dispersed as soon as "ten" left Dustin's mouth. Will hid in one of the abandoned cars, Lucas crouched deep in one of the bushes surrounding the clearing, while Max snuck into one of the overturned tires.

"Come on El." Mike whispered while grabbing her hand. They ran into the abandoned bus they knew so well.

"I don't understand this game." Eleven said quietly as if she were embarrassed to admit it.

"It's really easy, we just hide and try to make sure Dustin doesn't find us." He explained with a smile.

They decided their best bet was to hide underneath the seats. Mike let El slide in first and he followed. The pair laid on their stomachs, crowded under the old seats. They laid still and silent trying to listen for any indication of Dustin.

Suddenly Eleven broke the silence with a whisper, "Mike."

"Yeah?"

"I don't like this game."

"Why?"

"I don't like feeling..." She searched for the word, "hunted."

"It's okay El, I'm here" He said taking her hand with a smile, "and we don't have to play again if you don't want to."

El smiled back and squeezed his hand, it was soft and warm. Mike was worried if she could feel if it was sweating.

They laid there, hand in hand, until they heard the group's voices, one by one being found.

"They gotta be in the bus!"

"You didn't check the bus dumbass?" Max spat at Dustin.

"I hope we don't walk in on anything." Will said with a cheeky smile, it seemed he was improving everyday, making fun of his friends definitely helped him feel normal again.

Mike exhaled and put his head down. His hand was definitely sweating now.

The group entered the bus looking around intently, walking by Mike and El multiple times without even thinking to look. El let out a small giggle every time they did. She seemed to be enjoying the game, and Mike was relieved.

"What was that?"

"What?"

This made Eleven giggle even more.

"There you are!" Dustin shouted crouching down to see them.

Mike and El laughed, and El was even more happy when he told her that they technically won that round.

They continued to play and laugh until their shadows grew long on the dried grass. El ended up liking hide and seek more than Mike

expected, soon her anxieties dampened when she saw how happy the seeker was when they found her.

"Oh guys, I gotta go!" Lucas said looking down at his watch, "My parents want me home for dinner, I guess summer *really* doesn't start until tomorrow after all."

With a chorus of groans, they all decided the best bet was to head home after all. Mike invited everyone over tomorrow to really kick off the summer. He knew his basement was going to be the gangs second home for the summer, so best to get used to it early.

They all said their goodbyes and headed home, Mike offered his bike again to El and told her he'd take her home. And their ride back was just as good as the ride there. Eleven felt her heart speed up anytime she was this close to Mike, she didn't know why, but she knew she liked it. By the time they got back to the woods she didn't want to leave him. Leaving him was always hard, but he always reminded her he'd see her soon, and he'd never leave her for good.

The two made their way to the cabin, Mike telling her about all the fun things they would do this summer, and how happy he was to be able to spend it with her, at that part she saw how rosy his cheeks got, even his freckles seemed to darken.

"Well goodnight El!" He said walking her up to the door, "Do you want me to pick you up tomorrow?"

"I got it kid." Hopper said as he opened the door interrupting their goodbyes, "Gotta introduce me and my daughter to your parents, seeing how it doesn't seem like I'm gonna be able to get rid of you any time soon."

El shot him an icy glare.

"I'm kidding!" He said putting his hands up in defense. But for some reason, Mike didn't think he wasn't completely kidding.

"Alright, well it's settled, I'll see you tomorrow, 10:00 if that's okay." Hopper nodded in approval.

"Goodnight El, night chief" He said walking away giving them both a

wave.

"Night Mike." She said with a wide smile.

Mike thought about that smile the whole ride home. Tomorrow couldn't come any faster.

I really hope you guys like it so far! If you have any suggestions or request for what you want them to do during the Summer please let me know! Reviews are always appreciated, and messages often replied to! I'm planning to make this pretty long, and a slow burn. So please read and review!

3. The First Day

Since you've gone I been lost without a trace

He felt his hands on her hips.

I dream at night I can only see your face

Pulling her closer to him.

I look around but it's you I can't replace

He could feel her body pressed against his, making something deep in his stomach stir.

I feel so cold and I long for your embrace

Her dark doe eyes, stared into his, showing an unfamiliar twinkle

I keep crying baby, baby, please

He closed his eyes and started to lean in, his heart rate raising along with his body temperature. He's never wanted something so bad as he wanted to touch her lips right now. Mike could feel her short, nervous breath coat his lips. He could feel them growing closer, and closer...

"Mike honey! You gotta wake up your friends will be here in an hour!"

Mike opened his groggy eyes to hear his alarm radio playing the same song from his dream, and the snowball of course. He hurried into the bathroom, panicking at the lack of time he had to get ready.

He looked into the mirror and examined himself. His dark hair was matted to his forehead with sweat, and his face flushed. Feeling overwhelmed and dizzy, he knew his best bet was to hop in and take a cold shower. He combed his hair meticulously, trying to get it to look as tamed as possible. He just wanted to look as nice as he thought El looked, even though she didn't have to try. He threw on his nicest pair of casual clothes; he didn't want the boys to know how

hard he was trying.

Mike quietly tiptoed through his parent's room into their bathroom.

"And the final touch." He whispered spraying himself with a little too much of his father's cologne. He let out a wheezing cough.

"Kids, breakfast!"

Nancy left her room bumping into a visibly nervous Mike.

"Whoa there, why so..." She stopped herself, "What is that smell?"

"Um nothing."

"Are you wearing Dad's cologne?"

"No, w-why would you even ask that?"

"Mike, I could smell you a mile away, why are you getting so spruced up to hangout with the boys, unless..." She looked at him with playfully accusing eyes, "Eleven?"

Mike could feel how red his face must look to her.

"Well you look, and smell great, but next time just a couple of sprits, not half the bottle."

"Thanks Nance."

They walked down to the breakfast table, Mike anxiously smoothing out his shirt.

"Well don't you look nice!" Karen Wheeler said while putting a plate down in front of her son, "and is that cologne I smell?"

"No!"

Meanwhile, El was jumping into Hoppers truck, yelling at him to hurry up.

"I'm coming kid, you saw your friends yesterday, why are you always in a rush?"

Eleven could only think of one answer. Mike. She couldn't wait to see him looking at her with those dark eyes.

"Now remember the rules..."

"I know, no going into town, no going anywhere alone, and no being stupid."

"And one more, no funny business with the Wheeler kid." He said sternly.

"What do you mean, funny business?"

Hopper was relieved at her confusion. She was still innocently naïve, but he knew that wouldn't last. He'd have to get Joyce or Nancy to talk to her about all that girl stuff and he'd eventually have to say something to Mike, but he wasn't in any rush to do that.

"Don't worry about it, I'll explain some other time." He said ruffling her hair.

The chief and his new daughter walked up to the Wheeler house. El could feel her heart beating in her throat. She didn't understand her feelings completely, she knew she felt different about him than she did about Lucas, Will, or Dustin, but she didn't know what it meant.

Hopper rang the door bell and they waited in a nervous silence. It was Mrs. Wheeler who answered the door, with Mike standing anxiously behind her.

"Hello Chief Hopper!" She said with a welcoming smile.

"Hi Karen, this is my adopted daughter Jane, but she goes by El." He introduced, as El showed a tentative smile.

"Well hello El, we've surely heard a lot about you!" Eleven's cheeks got rosy as she thought about Mike talking about her to his family. Mike was also red in the face at his mother's comment.

"Alright kid, I'll see you later, make sure you say your please and thank yous." Hopper said while wrapping her in a hug, "thank you again for having her."

"The pleasure is all ours, come on in El, Mike will show you the basement, I'm sure you'll be spending all summer down there!" She said leading her inside, not knowing Eleven spent an entire week living down there. The pair looked at each other, sharing a secret smile.

Once they were down stairs they looked deep into each others eyes and launched themselves into a hug. El took a deep inhale of Mike's scent, then broke the hug.

"You smell, different." She said questioning.

"Oh yeah, that..." He started rubbing the back of his neck, feeling embarrassed, "I wanted to smell nice, for um, you."

El's heart sped up a bit and she felt her cheeks grow hot, he did that for her.

"I like it."

Mike let out a sigh of relief and met her eyes again. There it was! That unfamiliar twinkle from the dream. It made him feel that deep stir again, and before he knew it he was leaning into her, and she was leaning in too! He started to close his eyes and take it all in, here it comes he told himself...

"Whoa, what the hell is going on down here!" Lucas said laughing

"Lucas!" Max said hitting him on the arm.

"What?" He asked oblivious.

"Oh, hey guys" Mike said awkwardly.

Both him and El felt their hearts sink at the interruption. It had been months since Mike put his lips on hers, and El wanted it to happen again but didn't know why or how to go about it. She had a lot of trouble understanding her new feelings that came along with becoming a teenager. Mike also wanted to kiss her again too, but was afraid of taking advantage of her, she didn't know as much about social interaction as he did, and it felt wrong to coax her into something she didn't understand.

"So what do you guys want to do today?" Max said trying to ease the awkwardness.

The gang waited for Will and Dustin to show up before deciding to start their summer the way they always do, playing Dungeon and Dragons. Mike has been waiting forever to explain the game to El, he always liked showing her new things, especially things they can do together. He explained to her all about the campaign and how it works. Lucas took the responsibility of showing Max the ropes, and Dustin and Will made fun of both Mike and Lucas' heart eyes they had for the girls.

"Alright El, you're really gonna like this part!" Mike said with bursting excitement, "we're gonna design your character, she's going to be a mage of course."

"What's a mage?"

"Someone who uses magic, they have special powers like you." He smiled at her, and she returned it.

"Can she be pretty?"

"Of course, she's you, she'll be beautiful."

El felt her stomach flutter at his words, he was so pretty and so nice. She loved the way his face was sprinkled with freckles like the stars in the night sky they love to look at together. She looked deep into his dark eyes and he looked back into hers. Mike could feel that goofy smile forming on his mouth, the one that only showed when she was around.

"Are we gonna start this campaign or are we just gonna sit around and look at each other?" Will asked obviously ready to become Will the Wise and shoot his legendary fireballs.

"Yeah let's do it!" Mike said shaking him out of his love induced daze.

El looked away from Mike to find another pair of eyes on her, they belonged to Max. She felt the uncomfortable urge to look away until Max showed her a friendly smile. She returned it, but only slightly. She still didn't like the new girl in the group, but it seemed like the

boys wanted her around. That scared her, she didn't want Mike to like Max more than he liked her. But it seemed like she was going to be around for a while and best to just try to get along.

The campaign continued all day, stopping only for lunch, ham and cheese sandwiches courtesy of Mrs. Wheeler, except for the plate of Eggo's Mike made specially for El.

It was almost 6:00 when Mrs. Wheeler came down stairs.

"Hey Mike, I'm running over to Joyce's really quick and I'm going to go get pizza for you guys, are you gonna be okay if I leave?"

"Mom, we'll be fine!"

"Okay but you have to watch Holly."

"What? Why can't Nancy watch her?"

"Because Nancy is out with Jonathan, if I can trust you to be home alone, I can trust you to watch Holly, now she's going out to play in the sprinkler for a little, why don't you and your friends go outside for a while, it's summer, you shouldn't be in the basement all day anyway."

"Alright, come on guys lets go." Mike sighed rolling his eyes.

"But we have to finish the campaign!" Dustin said.

"We'll finish tomorrow, we have all summer!"

"But the flow!"

"Screw the flow Dustin, lets go" Lucas said following Mike toward the stairs.

"Fine but when everything gets fucked up don't come crying to me!"

The group all sat on the grass as Mike set up the sprinkler for Holly, who was patiently waiting in her favorite pink flower bathing suit.

"What's a sprinkler?" El asked allowed.

Max jumped at the opportunity to talk to her, more than just a hello, "It's like this thing that sprays water into the air and moves around."

"That sounds, weird."

Max let out a small chuckle, "No it's really fun! Especially if it's hot out like this and you don't have a pool!"

"Pool?"

"Like a giant bathtub!"

"Oh" The thought of the bath made El shudder.

"Baby steps, come on," She said grabbing the strange girls hand, "sprinkler first, then maybe we'll try a pool soon."

Max led El to the arch of water shooting up from the ground. Eleven looked at it in wonder, sticking her hand out into the stream she looked at the droplets forming on her hand, the sun creating dozens of shining orbs on her skin. Everyday she was discovering more about the world, with her friends by her side, and she couldn't be happier.

"Come on guys! Don't you wanna have some summer fun!" Max said shouting to the group of boys sitting out of the water's spray.

"You guys are not seriously gonna play in the sprinkler?" Lucas asked staring at the two girls.

"Yeah, sprinklers are for babies! That's why we're out here watching Holly!" Dustin added.

"The only babies I see here are you four." Max quipped back.

"Don't worry about it Max, if they want to be a bunch of mouth-breathers let them." El said leading the girl back to the water.

"Watch this!" She whispered to the redhead.

Max watched as El stared intensely at the spraying water, she suddenly cocked her head to the direction the boys were sitting and at the same moment the water shot at the boys, spraying them

completely.

"Oh my god El that was amazing!" Max said grabbing the girl by the shoulders, "Holy shit you're bleeding!"

"Oh, that happens." El said with a smile, wiping the small trail of blood trickling out of her nostril with the back of her hand.

"What the hell!" Dustin shouted standing up dripping wet.

"Oh that's it!" Mike said charging at El.

She let out a small squeal as Mike grabbed her from behind and pulled her into the stream of water with him.

"Not so funny now is it!" He said laughing as he let her down, making sure she was just as soaked as he was.

El just kept laughing, her dimples gleaming.

Soon everyone was playing with Holly in the the water, everyone trying to splash someone else, in the end it was Dustin who was the main target. Mike watched El as she smiled and splashed in the water. She reminded him of that rainy November night he and the boys found her. Except she wasn't that short haired little girl anymore, she was starting to look like a normal teenage girl, but an extraordinary beautiful teenage girl, at least to Mike. He let his eyes travel over her body, he tried not to look at her that way but he couldn't help it. He noticed how much her body developed over the last two years, like in the way they talk about in health class, and he could tell she didn't have a bra on. It made him feel hot, and that stir from earlier start up again. It made him want to kiss her, and touch her, and...

"Hey, snap out of it lover boy." Max said snapping her fingers, "leave those thoughts for the shower."

"W-what are you talking about?" He said his face growing red at her implication.

"You know what I'm talking about!"

"MICHAEL WHEELER!"

"Oh shit!" He was happy to get out of the discussion with Max, but less happy to find his mom standing at the back door with her hands on her hips.

"I told you to watch Holly, not ruin all of your clothes!"

"Sorry mom, things kind of got out of hand."

His mom broke her stone face with a small smile. She was glad to see her son happy again.

"Well find your friends some dry clothes, pizzas on the counter." She grabbed Holly's hand and went back into the house.

Mike led the boys into his room, "Alright, you guys know where all my clothes are, just try to find something that will fit, I have to go find clothes for the girls."

"Try not to find anything too saucy for El." Lucas said wiggling his eyebrows.

Mike rolled his eyes and left the room, finding the girls standing in the hallway giggling.

"You guys can change in Nancy's room; she definitely has some clothes you can borrow."

Mike found an old dark blue pajama set for Max, he hopped it wasn't too girly for her. For El he found a pair of pink flannel pants.

"Here you go Max." He said handing her the clothes.

"And these are for you." He said giving El the pants, "also, you can wear this, it's my favorite."

He gave El his Hawkins's Middle School AV club sweatshirt. It was really his favorite, but now he wanted her to have it. He thought of her wearing it with nothing underneath made him start to sweat.

"Alright, well I'll leave you two to change." He said shutting the door

behind him.

"Do you want me to leave so you can change first?" Max said afraid of freaking El out, she knew becoming closer to her would be a learning experience.

"No it's fine." El said turning away from her while starting to remove her shirt. El still didn't understand all that much about privacy, especially around other girls, even though she's never really around them.

She quickly threw on the clothes Mike gave her, taking in the smell of his sweatshirt as she did.

"Wow, Mike really gave you his AV sweatshirt?"

"Yeah." El said smiling.

"That's so sweet, all the boys love those things, I think he really likes you El."

"Really?" El asked feeling her face flush.

"He looks at you like you're the only girl on the planet, and usually I'm not into that gushy shit, but it is really cute."

El smiled to herself, smelling the sweatshirt again.

A knock came from the door, "Are you guys done? We're gonna grab the pizza and start a movie."

"Yeah we're done!" El responded.

The group went back down into the basement grabbing the pizza on the way. They carefully moved the Dungeons and Dragons Board on to the ground and sat around the table eating and planning what to do throughout the summer. Max wanted to check out the quarry, Dustin wanted to have a movie night, El wanted to spend a day by a pool, and the list went on and on. The possibilities for the summer went until Will stole the last piece of pizza right from Dustin's plate.

"Well it's only 7:30, looks like we have time for a movie!" Dustin said

grabbing his backpack off the back of his chair, "and look what Steve rented for us!" Dustin held up a worn looking VHS of Friday the 13th.

"Guys, I don't know if that's a good idea, I mean I don't want El to get freaked out." Mike said protectively.

"Mike, El has seen more messed up shit than any of us, Will is definitely a close second though, she'll be fine." Lucas argued, he really wanted to watch a scary movie, and hopefully sit close to Max.

El and Will nodded in approval, signaling Dustin to put it in.

The group gathered up a mountain of blankets and pillows and spread them on the floor. Lucas made sure to sit next to Max, and Mike made sure to sit next to El, while Dustin made sure to shut the lights off to scare everyone even more.

"Hey, if you get scared at all, I'm right here." Mike whispered in her ear, it made her shiver and smile at the same time.

The movie started up, Mike had to explain to El what summer camp was and all the other things she didn't understand, but he didn't mind, he liked being able to lean into her and whisper to her. Soon the horror part of a horror movie began and he felt her jump next to him, he searched for her hand under the blanket and smiled at her. They remained like that, even during the not so scary parts. But those classic slasher scenes weren't the worst part for Mike, it was the sex scenes. They made his hands sweaty and his face hot. What did El think of this? Did she know what sex exactly is? Was she thinking about him? Was she thinking about him thinking about her? All the questions made his head spin, but luckily those scenes seemed to pass and they were more into the blood bath part. He felt El lean into him, putting her head on his shoulder hiding her face from the TV.

"You okay?" He said wrapping his arm around her.

"Yeah I'll be fine, don't worry." She said showing him a confident smile.

They stayed like that for the rest of the movie, El wasn't really that scared, but it seemed like the best way to get close to Mike.

Soon the movie ended, with everyone a little more jumpy than before.

"So what did you guys think?" Dustin asked grinning so big you can see his new teeth.

"I already saw it." Max said coolly, the boys knew she's seen more horror movies than all of them combined.

"I think we should go camping!" El said excitedly.

"El, that movie should make you never want to go camping!" Will said with a laugh.

"No I think that would be a really fun idea."

"Mike, El could say she wants to jump off a cliff and you'd agree." Lucas chuckling.

"I think it would be cool too." Max agreed, giving El a sly smile.

"El your dad's here!" They heard Mike's mom calling from upstairs.

"Here I'll walk you up." Mike offered leading her up the stairs.

"Bye guys, I guess I'll see you tomorrow!" She said with a wide smile, she could get used to seeing her friends everyday.

"Bye El!" They called in unison as the pair left the basement.

He walked her to the front door, carrying her wet clothes in a plastic bag, finding Hopper waiting for her in the door way.

"Well I guess this is goodnight El." He said smiling bringing her into a hug.

"Goodnight Mike." El said hugging him tighter.

"What do you say El?" Hopper said trying to get them to break apart.

"Thank you for having me Mike."

"You're welcome, Jane." He said giggling as she hit him in the arm.

He watched her leave longingly, wishing she could stay forever. She waved as they pulled out of the drive way, and he waved back watching them drive down the road.

The rest of the party left soon after she did, leaving Mike alone with his thoughts, and of course the responsibility to clean the basement.

By the time he finished it was nearly 10:30 and he was ready to go to bed. He made his way upstairs to his room passing Nancy's in the process, she was laying on her bed reading a one of her magazines. He didn't even hear her come in.

"Hey Nance, when did you come home?"

"About 15 minutes ago, how was your day?" She asked with a smile.

"It was really good! But I have kind of a weird question." He said blushing, trying not to meet her eyes.

"Okay?" She asked suspiciously.

"W-when did you start wearing, um, a bra?"

"I don't know, 13 maybe, why?"

"Well, it just I don't think El-"

"Okay, okay alright, I'll spare you the embarrassment of telling your older sister you were looking at a girl's breast," She said interrupting him, "I'll take her shopping tomorrow."

"Thank you Nancy, but please don't tell her I said anything!"

"It's fine, and remember Mike you can talk to me about anything." She said putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Thanks again Nance, but I think I've had enough brother-sister humiliation for one night." He said leaving her room.

"Night Mike, and sweet dreams!" She said laughing as her brother left her room red in the face.

Alright I really hope you guys liked this chapter! Sorry it took so long to update, I finally got out of my creative slump lol. Thank you so much for reading and reviewing, I can't tell you how much I appreciate it! Also shout-out to Madi for the camping idea, I have to fill a whole summer of fun for these guys, so ideas for future chapters are always appreciated! Remember read, review and enjoy! And feel free to inbox me if you don't want to leave something in the comments! Love you guys!

4. Girls' Day

After enough negotiation Hopper finally agreed to let El go shopping with Max and Nancy, under the condition that he came along. None of the girls were too happy about daddy Hopper tagging along on their girls' day, but they understood why he had to come, they were already breaking one of his rules so of course measures had to be taken. He knew he'd have to give the girls some space, but he was still on edge about the whole thing.

They picked up Max first, her parents came out to meet the chief of police and their daughter's first girl friend. El was still warming up to Max, but she decided it was better to have another female friend to go through all this growing up stuff with.

Next was Nancy, Mike of course came out to say hi to El, she got out of the car to let Nancy have the front seat.

"Hi Mike."

"Hi El."

They hugged each other tightly, as they always did.

"Alright kid, it's girls' day, beat it." Hopper said jokingly, although how much the two hugged each other bugged him a little bit. He was growing more and more protective of El everyday, and wearier of teenage boys too.

They said a quick goodbye and El got back into the car.

"Alright, I don't want to be out in public for too long, so this is not a shopping spree, this is get the stuff you need and get out." Hopper explained to the three girls.

"Okay, but we're women, shopping takes at least twice as long as it does for men." Nancy said with a smile trying to calm the chief down a bit.

"Nancy, you're the only one who can be considered a woman, these two are girls." Hopper didn't want El growing up any faster than she

already was.

"Alright, well do you think the girls could come back to my house after? I don't want this girls' day to end so soon!" Nancy said flashing a smile to the backseat.

"That's fine, El would probably be running over to see your brother anyway."

El blushed and looked down at her sneakers, he was right, but she didn't want him to know he was right.

Soon enough they were at what would be considered a mall in a small town like Hawkins. Nancy led them to the store that she has been going to since she was El and Max's age.

"I'm gonna let you three do your thing, and I'll wait over here," Hopper said standing awkwardly by the door, "But remember if you see anything suspicious, you come straight to me okay?"

"Okay."

"Alright, now have fun." He smiled ruffling her hair.

"Okay, so we don't want to blow all your dads money to let's start with the essentials and then work from there, so underwear first."

She led the girls to the section of the store that had the bras and panties.

"Pick out some underwear, and then we'll move on to bras."

They walked over to the table where all the underwear was displayed. El felt all the fabrics, she didn't know panties came in so many different colors and cuts and fabrics, she didn't know where to begin. She picked up a pink pair, they were soft and had a little lace detailing. For some reason while looking at them she thought of Mike. What his underwear looks like, and what he would think of the ones she was holding. Her face got hot, and she immediately shook the thoughts out of her mind. She ended up picking that pair in a couple different colors.

"Oh those are really cute! Nice pick." Nancy exclaimed.

"Thanks." She said shyly.

"Now on to bras."

"Hey Max," El said quietly, trying to make sure Nancy didn't hear, "What's a bra?"

"Oh, it's kind of like underwear for your chest, so they don't move around as much and stuff."

"Oh, okay."

Nancy led El to the bras, "So, what size do you think you are?"

"I have no idea." El said with a tinge of embarrassment.

"Well that's okay! We'll figure it out." She could see how nervous the girl was, "I'm about a B cup, but I'm small chested for my age, so that might be good for you!"

Nancy and Max grabbed a few bras ranging from A to C, just for good measure.

Nancy and Max sat outside the dressing room, making small talk. She didn't know Max all that well yet, but it was nice to be out for a girls' day, since Barb died she's been missing stuff like this, plus she liked to be that cool older sister these two desperately needed.

"Hey Nancy, do you think you can come and uh- "

"Yeah, I'm coming!"

"Don't worry, it's hard to do by yourself for a while." She said fastening the bra, "You should see a boy try to unhook it, it's like trying to solve a Rubik cube for them."

That made her think of Mike, would he know how to unhook it?

After trying on the various sizes with Nancy's help, they finally decided she was a B cup, which Max said was big for her age and

continued to inform El that was a good thing. They found the colors that matched the underwear she found, she didn't know why they had to match, but Nancy told her she always felt better when her underwear matched, claiming it was a "girl thing".

Next they picked out a couple pairs of shorts, shirts and pajamas, Nancy even convinced her to buy a skirt.

"Alright I think we should get you at least one dress, for more formal occasions and stuff."

"Can it be pretty?"

"Of course it will be!" Nancy said with a smile, "and I think Max just found you the perfect one." Pointing behind El where Max stood.

El looked at herself in the mirror, the dress was more casual than her one for the snowball, but just as pretty, it had capped sleeves that fell just below her shoulders, clinched at the waist and fell about mid thigh. And most importantly it was her favorite color, light pink.

"Oh my gosh El! Mike is gonna freak when he sees you in this!" Nancy said practically jumping up and down.

"It's a good thing." Max added seeing the girl's eyes widen in confusion.

El retrieved Hopper as the girls piled the clothes onto the check out counter. His eyes widened when he saw the undergarments she picked out.

"Put these back, you don't need them yet." He said handing El one of the bras.

"Come on Chief, she's a growing girl, and trust me she definitely does." Nancy defended before EL could even get a word in.

El was happy Nancy stepped in, she really didn't know what to say to her new dad to make him understand. She was just as new to this stuff as he was. He ended up spending a little more than he anticipated, but he really didn't mind.

"Thank you Dad." El said smiling up at Hopper.

"Well it was about time you stopped wearing my old t-shirts."

The ride to the Wheeler's house went by quickly as Nancy blasted the radio and sang along with the girls to some new Cyndi Lauper song he didn't recognize, much to his annoyance. But he was happy to see El having fun with other girls, he just wanted her to be happy and become as normal as she could be, given what she has been through.

"Alright El, I'll be back later to pick you up." He said turning the down the radio while pulling into the Wheeler's drive way.

The three began to pile out of the car when Hopper put his hand on Nancy's shoulder, "I want you to take this girl time to talk to her about, you know, girl stuff, things I'm not really qualified to talk to her about."

"Don't worry Chief, I'll fill her in."

"Thanks Nancy, I owe you one."

Nancy led the girls into the house, only to be met by an out of breath Mike that must have heard them come in.

"Oh I'm happy you guys are home! The guys are here and we were just going to start a Star Wars marathon, I've really wanted to show you them!"

El opened her mouth to respond but was cut off by Nancy, "Sorry Mike, but it's girls day, El and Max are going to spend the afternoon with me, come on girls." She said smugly leading them up the stairs leaving Mike dumbfounded. He quickly retreated to the basement.

"Listen up, Nancy, El, and Max just got home, and they're going up to Nancy's room for girl time!" Mike said sounding panicked.

"Who cares? They're probably just gonna eat ice cream and talk about how hot Tom Cruise is." Dustin replied looking back to the TV.

"Well Lucas and I should care! Max and El aren't gonna talk about Tom Cruise, they're gonna talk about us! And Will, Nancy is

definitely gonna talk about Jonathan!"

"I don't want to know anything about that." Will said making a disgusted face.

"Well now I'm a little curious." Lucas said now feeling as anxious as Mike.

"And don't you guys want to know what girls talk about behind closed doors?" Mike added trying to convince Will and Dustin.

"Fine, but you realize this is a total invasion of privacy." Will claimed feeling a little uncomfortable about the whole thing.

"Well yeah, but I wanna know if Max says anything about me!" Lucas said before Mike could begin to defend his plan.

"Fine, because I know you and Mike won't shut up about it unless we agree, even though this is just wishful thinking, they may not even mention you guys." Dustin said with a tinge of resentment, he was still a little burnt by the whole Max and Lucas thing, but Steve was helping him move on.

"I guess I'm in." Will added, and the boys headed up to Mikes room.

In Nancy's room the girls sat together on Nancy's bed surrounded by the bags of El's new clothes.

"So what do we do during a," El searched for the term Nancy used, "Girls' day?"

Nancy looked at both of the girls, Max was wondering just as much as El was, this was clearly a first for them, "Well, we talk about girl stuff, stuff you don't talk about with the boys!"

"Oh." El said still a little confused on the whole thing, she didn't know there was things you couldn't talk to the boys about.

Nancy decided to ease into the conversation, "So El, what do you think about the stuff you bought today?"

"I really like everything, mostly the dress." She said flashing a coy

smile at Max.

"I know, no offense Max but I didn't think you'd have such great taste!" Nancy added.

"Hey I might not wear this crap, but I know what's nice and what's not." She said laughing, "so what do you think of your new bras, who knew you'd be a B cup!"

Through the wall Mike's face went bright red.

"Ooo, you hear that Mike, a B cup!" Lucas said hitting his arm.

"Shut up Lucas, don't talk about her like that."

"Sorry Mike, I know, that's for only you to know."

Mike rolled his eyes and put his ear back to the wall straining to hear their muffled voices.

"I really like them, but I don't think I'll be able to hook it."

"It'll get easier trust me, the best thing to do is just to hook it in front first and then spin it around."

"Yeah, soon you'll be an expert at it."

Nancy took the opportunity to move the onto the topic of boys, something Hopper probably wanted her to talk about, "Yeah and wait until a boy tries to unhook it, you'll definitely feel like an expert then."

"That'll definitely be a challenge for Mike." Max said trying to conceal her laughter.

"Come on Max that's my brother."

Through the wall the boys we're doubled over trying to hold in their laughter as Mike held his burning face in his hands.

"But why would he take it off?" El asked innocently.

Max and Nancy shared a look, "Why don't you take this one Nancy,

you're experienced."

Nancy shot her jokingly hurt look, "Well El, sometimes when you're with a boy you really like, you'll want to touch each other, you know?"

El nodded thinking about the longing she feels for Mike sometimes.

"But this usually happens once you're really comfortable with someone, and you really like them."

"Yeah like after you kissed them a couple times and stuff like that." Max added.

"Kiss?"

"Yeah when you someone puts their lips on yours."

"Oh." El said with a big smile forming across her mouth.

"Ooo El, do you have something to tell us?" Max said poking the girl with her finger.

"Mike kissed me." She said through a smile.

"Oh my gosh, when?" Nancy asked curious about the nature of El and her brothers relationship.

"Well first- "

"First?!" Nancy cut her off.

"Well once after the bath, and again at the Snowball."

"Oh my gosh El! How cute, this is too much!"

The boys had their ears pressed against the wall intently, until Dustin broke the silence, "You kissed El twice, and never told us!" He whispered.

"I didn't know I had to tell you guys." Mike said his face bright red, resembling a sun burn.

"You're the first one of us to kiss a girl and you didn't think to tell us?"

"Shhhh I'm trying to listen!" Lucas spat.

"What about you Max? Have you kissed anyone yet." Nancy asked loving how this conversation was going.

"Well, I may or may not have kissed Lucas at the Snowball."

"Oh my gosh!" El let out.

"Was that your first kiss?"

"Yeah it was." Max answered blushing.

All the boys turned to look at Lucas, "Oh so there's another one who didn't let us in on his first kiss!" Dustin said, now even more a little annoyed at him.

"Does anyone want to get anything else off their chest, before more stuff comes out?" Will asked tentatively, trying to stay out of the confrontation as much as possible.

"No." The boys said in unison.

"Wait so all those late night sneak outs with El, you guys didn't kiss or anything?" Lucas asked raising an eyebrow.

"Well I wanted to, but I didn't know if she wanted to."

"Pay up boys." Will said smugly.

"You guys had a bet whether or not El and I were out kissing?" Mike said shocked at the idea.

"Well Lucas bet you guys were kissing, Dustin bet you guys were fooling around."

"Oh my god guys! That's so disgusting!" Mike said feeling annoyed and also a little wound up at the idea of fooling around with El.

"Sorry Mike." They all said looking at their feet feeling a little

ashamed.

"It's okay, just don't think about me and El anymore, it's weird."

Through the wall the girls were continuing their conversation, Nancy decided to leave the boy conversation there, she didn't want to go into too much detail regarding sex, they were too young for that, plus she didn't want Hopper to think she was giving the girls any ideas. First and second base was all they needed to know about right now.

"So Nancy, do you think you and Jonathan would want to go camping with us sometime this summer?" Max asked while flipping through one of Nancy's countless magazines.

"Yeah I think that would be a ton of fun, but good luck convincing Hopper."

"You don't think he'd let us?" El asked quietly.

"Well you know how protective he is of you." She started, "But I might be able to convince Joyce to talk him into it."

"Oh really Nancy!? Would you do that for us!?" El asked pretty much jumping up and down.

"Yes, yes, just calm down and don't get your hopes up, this won't be easy." She replied with a chuckle, "so who came up with this whole camping idea?"

"Well El did after we watched Friday the 13th."

"El, why would that movie make you want to go camping?"

"Well, Mike explained what camping exactly was to me and I thought it would be fun."

"Well like I said, I can't make any promises, but I'll try to get Joyce to put in a good word with the chief."

"Did you guys hear that? Nancy is going to try to help us go camping!" Mike said ecstatically, he imagined camping with El and his friends would be one of the best things they could do all summer,

"do you guys think your parents would be okay with that?"

"Well if we're going with the chief, I don't see why my parents would have a problem."

Dustin nodded in agreement with Lucas.

"Yeah, and I'm guessing my mom would want to come with us anyway, plus she wants this summer to be the best one yet for me." Will added feeling a little embarrassed by his mother's constant concern for him, "But what about you Mike, your parents wouldn't let you go on a boy-girl camping trip."

"Well like Lucas said, if we're with the chief what's there to worry about? And Nancy will be with us."

The boys and girls continued their separate days until Jonathan came to pick Nancy up for their date, a little after 5. The girls joined the boys down in the basement, where they retreated to earlier trying to avoid suspicion from the girls.

"So how was your girls' day?" Dustin asked mockingly.

"It was actually fun, El bought a lot of cute stuff today." Max said, shocking everyone with her comment about having fun.

Mike felt his face warm thinking about the bras El bought, his eyes slowly made their way over to her chest, causing his stomach tighten. His gaze lingered a little too long and El caught his eyes. He looked into her eyes as quickly as possible, feeling his cheeks burn. He could see a blush spreading on her soft skin and a smile form on her lips. This made his stomach coil again. He was worried he offended her, feeling like a creep, but her smile made him feel a little better. Little did he know El didn't feel uncomfortable, his look made her nervous, but in a good way, and her earlier discussion with Nancy helped her understand why a little bit more.

"uhm," Mike cleared his dry throat, "So did you guys think anymore about going camping?" He said desperate to change the conversation.

"Yeah, actually Nancy is going to talk to Will's mom, and she's going to try and convince El's dad!" Max said.

"Oh really?" Dustin said, as the boys made similar comments, trying to act like this was the first time they were hearing about it.

"Yeah so it's actually a possibility." Max responded.

"But it's going to be hard trying to convince Hopper to go along with it." Dustin commented.

"Alright, so we have a new mission, get Hopper to say yes to camping!" Mike explained as everyone nodded in agreement.

So I really hope you guys liked this chapter! I wanted to do something with the girls and boys being separate, and El and Max getting a little closer. I want to thank you all again for reading and reviewing, I love reading your reviews, they really bring a smile to my face! I'm hoping to update within the next couple days. Once again I hope you guys enjoyed!

5. Convincing Hopper

Everyone knew convincing Hopper to let El go camping was going to be one of their toughest challenges yet, including all the crazy shit they've been through since they met her. If they wanted this to work out they knew they'd have to plan each step meticulously. Starting with El and Hopper. Hopper isn't the type who likes hearing things through the grape vine, so they knew their best bet was to start with El bringing it up to him first.

They sat around their small table, Hopper pouring syrup on El's Eggos as he did every morning. El was unusually quiet, and her new father took notice.

"Anything on your mind kid? You're awfully quiet."

"Well, I had something to ask you."

Hopper's mind swam for a moment, he prayed it wasn't anything about boys, he really couldn't talk about that over breakfast, or even worse puberty, "Alright, hit me with it."

"Well the party and I were talking about going camping this summer." She said trying not to make direct eye contact with him.

"Camping?"

"Yes."

"El, I know it's been a while and I'm letting you have more freedom now, but I don't think this is a good idea."

"But we'd be out in the middle of no where! No one would even know we were there!"

"It's still a risk, and I'm not sure how I feel about you going camping with a bunch of boys."

"Well Max and Nancy would be there too, and you, and probably Will's mom."

"I don't know, this is a big request, you're gonna have to give me a while to think about this."

"Okay." She said looking back down at her breakfast.

"You better eat those Eggos, before I do." He said with a smile.

She returned the smile, this didn't go as bad as she expected, but also not as well as she hoped. Nancy would have to convince Joyce to work her magic on this one, or this trip was as good as dead.

And that was step two.

Nancy was going over to the Byer's house to hangout with Jonathan while Joyce took Will to therapy with Doctor Owens. She and Hopper would bring Will and El once a week for their appointments, giving Will a chance to move on from the events from last year, El an opportunity to try to become a normal teenager and recover from her traumatic past, while Joyce and Hopper had time to talk. Something they both enjoyed very much.

Nancy knew she'd have to have time to talk to Joyce before she left so she can try to convince her to persuade Hopper into this crazy trip. She's already talked to Jonathan about it, they hoped that with power in numbers they'd be able to convince her. Especially if Will was on board too.

Nancy arrived at around 10:00 AM.

"Morning Mrs. Byers!" She said when Jonathan walked her in.

"Morning Nancy, you want any breakfast?" She said while scrambling eggs.

"No thank you, I already ate." She sat down at the table with Johnathan and Will.

"Mom, we actually have to talk to you about something." Jonathan said in his usual tentative voice.

Joyce turned around to face the table, seeing all three sets of eyes on her, and she began to feel panic coming on, "Will, honey are you

okay? Did something happen? Are you having visions again? Because you know Dr. Owens- "

"Mom I'm fine, we were actually wondering what you would think about the party going camping? With Jonathan, Nancy and you too?"

"Well I think that sounds like a lot of fun hon, but I'm not sure how Hopper would feel about all of this. You know how protective of El and the rest of you guys he is."

"That's why we wanted to talk to you, I think you have the best chance of convincing him into saying yes."

"I mean I can try, but I can't promise anything, the chief is a tough nut to crack."

"Please mom, we just all think it would be a great way to kick off the summer."

Joyce looked into Wills big puppy dog eyes. She could never say no to her children, especially her baby. After everything he's been through she just wanted him to be happy, and normal again.

"I'll try my best." She said kissing him on the cheek, "now come on, finish your breakfast and get your shoes on, we don't want to be late."

Since closing the gate, Will and El have been seeing Dr. Owens a few towns over in his private office. Joyce always encouraged Will to talk to her about how each session went and if he felt he was improving or not. Hopper on the other hand gave El all the space she needed, he never asked too many questions, or tried to interrogate her, he knew if she wanted to talk she would come to him if and when she was ready.

Hopper pulled into the drive way to find Will and Joyce waiting by her car, waiting for them.

"Hey Hop," Joyce said as he got out of the truck.

"Hey Joyce," He said sounding more irritated than usual.

The adults brought Will and El in, said hello to doctor Owens and

retreated to the parking lot. They leaned against Joyce's car as Hopper lit a cigarette.

"Something on your mind Hop?"

He passed her the smoke, "Have the kids mentioned this camping thing to you?"

She took a drag, coughing just a little, she was finally getting used to his unfiltered camels, "They may have mentioned it, why?"

"El asked me about it this morning, you know we have to lay low, but you should have seen her face Joyce."

"Listen, I know you guys have to be careful for a while, but we'd be in the middle of no where, and think about how much fun she'd have! It would be a completely new thing for her."

"Yeah, I guess, but it's just too big of a risk."

"Look Hopper, I know you're always worried about losing her, but she's not going anywhere, and..." She cut herself off for a moment, thinking of her words carefully, "I just want Will to have a good summer, you know, he and El both deserve that, but I understand if you're not comfortable."

"No, you're right, I'm just being over protective, I just can't lose another..."

Joyce cut him off, wrapping her arms around him, "I know, I know, but we'll be with them, even though we know El can take care of herself."

Hopper let out a chuckle, smoke escaping his mouth, he passed Joyce the cigarette as they broke apart.

"So is that a yes?"

"I guess." He said rolling his eyes, "I don't know how you girls always break me."

"Just think about how happy El will be when you tell her!"

"Well don't say anything to Will just yet, I want to be the one to tell her, gotta go over the rules and everything, if she hears it from her friends first I'll just go in one ear and out the other."

"Mums the word."

Hopper and Joyce stayed out by the car talking more and sharing cigarettes, something they seemed to be doing more often now a-days, until Will and El came out from their appointments, looking content, as they usually do when they leave Dr. Owens.

"How was your session sweetie!" Joyce said putting an arm around her son.

"It was good." He said, it was his usual response.

"Alright, I have to get to the station at some point today, so I'll see you later Joyce."

"Bye Hop," She said with a wink, "bye El."

"Bye Mrs. Byers, bye Will."

"Bye El, will you be at Mike's later?"

El looked at Hopper, asking for his permission with just her eyes, he gave her a nod in reply.

She nodded excitedly back at Will.

"Alright than I'll see you later!"

The two pairs got into their respective cars and headed back home.

"So, how was your appointment?" Hopper asked turning the radio down.

Her response was identical to Will's, but he didn't pry for anymore information, "So I was talking to Joyce before, and she thinks this camping thing would be good for you and your friends."

El said nothing, she just looked at him wide eyed waiting to hear

what he had to say on the matter.

"And I think that it wouldn't be such a bad idea after all."

"Oh thank you! Thank you!" She said trying to pull him into an awkward side hug.

"Alright, alright I'm driving," he replied with a chuckle, "but there are still going to be rules, and they're going to be even stricter."

"Stricter?"

"Yeah it means they're going to be stronger and taken more seriously, let that be your word of the day."

She nodded grinning ear to ear, she didn't care about the rules, all she cared about was that she gets to go.

"I won't bore you with it now, because I can tell you're too excited to actually hear any of them, plus I want all your friends to hear them too."

She still had the wide grin spread across her face as she nodded again. Seeing her so happy made Hopper smile too.

He dropped her off at the cabin, and called up the Wheeler house. He told Mike he had to pick her up because he would be at the station late and he would pick her up later. He also went over the normal rules, use the secret knock (Mike was now the only other person to know it), don't leave his bike by the side of the road, and no hanging out at the cabin, adding the comment about no funny business. Hopper could practically hear Mike's embarrassment through the receiver, him stumbling over his "Yes Sir" and his hasty good bye.

"Alright kid, I have to get to work, so I'll pick you up when I get off."

"Okay." She pulled him into a hug, he knew she was still feeling grateful for the whole camping thing, and he returned it with a kiss on the top of her head.

"I'll see you later."

Mike headed over to the cabin a little bit after two o'clock, the rest of the party was told to come over around three, giving himself enough time to pick El up. He peddled down the winding streets feeling the sun beat down on his heavy black hair. Normally the excessive heat would have bothered him, but not now. He thought about seeing El again, and he began to think about their reunion in the Byer's living room, a memory he often recalls. Seeing her walk through the doorway made his heart feel like it was going to burst. The emotion was overwhelming, as if he was feeling everything at once, a huge contrast to the emptiness he felt for almost an entire year while she was gone. He couldn't help the tears that welled up in his eyes and trickled down his cheeks, something that occasionally happens when he replays the scene in his mind. Now every time he saw her he could feel that familiar heart bursting sensation he felt that night. It's a feeling he cherishes. Being lost in his thoughts he almost missed the large tree that indicated the cabin was close. He hopped off his bike and walked it into the woods, dropping it off about halfway to the cabin, completely out of sight from the road.

He walked up to the door, knocking the secret knock he felt so privileged to know. As he heard the locks clicking one by one he felt his heart beat faster.

She opened the door smiling wide. She had her classic chucks on, jean shorts and what must be a new flannel she bought with Nancy and Max, it was more fitted than the hand-me-downs she received from Hopper. Every time he saw her she took his breath away.

"Hey El." He greeted with a goofy smile.

"Hey Mike."

"You ready to get going?" He said beginning to turn to the porch stairs.

"I actually want to tell you something before we go."

Mike's heart beat rapidly, has he done something? Was she mad at him? Did she catch him looking at her...*in that way*?

His worries faded when he saw the smile she was trying to contain.

"We're going camping!" She practically shouted ecstatically.

Mike didn't know what to say, he highly doubted Hopper would even entertain the idea, let alone say yes. He only responded with a large grin matching hers, and wrapping his lanky arms around her.

"I wanted to tell you before I told the rest of the party."

That made his smile grow even larger. He couldn't wait to spend multiple days with El, eating meals, hanging out, sleeping close her. He felt like he was in a dream, this was too perfect. Camping was going to be perfect.

Alright, so this was kind of like a filler chapter for plot reasons, but I really hope you guys liked it! Sorry for the long wait, school is killing me, so thank you for being patient and supportive! Also thank you all so much for reading and reviewing, it means so much to me! Look out for more chapters coming soon! And feel free to make request or suggestions! Thanks again, love you guys!

6. The Plan

Since the Tuesday that Hopper agreed to the camping trip the days went by agonizingly slow. The chief thought the safest bet would be to travel to a secluded lake over an hour outside of Hawkins and to go during the week, to avoid any weekend campers. Dustin, Lucas, and Max's parents all agreed with little protest, but the Wheeler's were a little harder to persuade. Mike was determined not to let his parents ruin this for him and played the "the chief will be there" card as hard as he could and after enough they broke.

The party spent the majority of the rest of the week planning what to do on the trip and discussing how much fun it would be. Max and El even talked about going shopping again to pick out El a bathing suit, something that made Mike's mind wander and his face get hot.

On Sunday, Hopper planned for everyone to meet at Joyce's house to discuss the plan and rules for their trip, which they would leave for the next day. The chief somehow managed to get the week off, but since closing the gate Hawkins went back to the small, safe, and quiet town it had been before so he'd probably just be sitting in the station anyway.

At 5:30 Joyce set the table, and the other folding table she had to put out to fit the many guest she was expecting tonight. She was set on making dinner for everyone, but Will insisted it would be easier to just order pizza, and after little argument she agreed, less dishes for her. Hopper and El were the first to arrive, fifteen minutes before everyone else would. This was not surprising seeing how the chief was the only other adult running this outing. They sat at the table going over the boring details as Will showed El the all new drawings he's been working on. He and El had gotten much closer since closing the gate, between their appointments and Joyce being the only mother type of figure El had, they grew closer over time, just like their parents. He showed her an updated drawing of the party, this time including Max and El. He drew her in a long elven style light pink dress, with a jeweled silver headband extenuating the long flowing hair he drew her with.

"Oh Will it's so pretty!"

"You really think so?" He asked modestly.

Her favorite part was that he put her and Mike's characters' side by side, just as it should be.

"Yes, very pretty."

He continued to show her his drawing and new art supplies he was finally able to buy with his allowance, art was his best type of therapy, it calmed him when his PTSD episodes seemed to crush him. It was the same type of escapism El gets from her soap operas, or when Hopper soothes her to sleep by reading the classics he stored in the cabin.

It wasn't long after that the others began to arrive, Mike and Nancy, then Lucas and Max together not too long after. The boys of course gave Lucas a round of winks and kissy faces while Max wasn't looking. Last to show was Dustin, late as usual.

"Alright, since every one is here, lets go over some rules." Hopper announced to the group of people spread out amongst the Byer's living room.

"Wait, we still have one coming!" Dustin interjected.

Hopper scanned the room, everyone was accounted for, and then there was a knock. He shot Dustin a glare and went for the door, to find the one and only Steve Harrington standing there in all his glory (and hair).

"You invited Steve?" Mike asked his face showing confusion.

Nancy who was sitting next to Jonathan shifted uncomfortably.

"Yeah! Steve's the man!"

Steve smiled at the comment with a tinge of his old cocky ways and then saw the anxiety on his ex-girlfriends face.

"Well, I don't have to come-" He offered before Nancy cut him off.

"Oh no! It's fine, you're pretty much Dustin's dad now, of course

you're invited!"

The tension in the room seemed to dissolve to a reasonable amount. Hopper regained the attention of the group.

"Alright, alright listen up, this may be a vacation but there are some rules we all have to follow, number one, El goes nowhere by herself *no* exceptions. Second Joyce and I are in charge, once again no exceptions. And third, boys and girls sleep in separate tents, no- "

"Exceptions." Everyone responded cutting him off.

He looked at them annoyed, "You all have to understand that this is a risk and an unnecessary one at that, so remember that if you see anything suspicious you come to me immediately. I don't want you guys playing Scooby Doo, you come to me!"

Everyone nodded in agreement.

"Finally, everyone behaves, I want you all to have fun, but no going wild, this is a privilege and it will never happen again if you all act like a bunch of assholes."

"Hopper!" Joyce practically shouted.

"Sorry, jerks." He corrected himself.

Joyce stood up next to him in front of the group, "Now that we got all of the rules and regulations out of the way, here's the plan for tomorrow, we'll all meet here tomorrow around ten, we'll pack the cars up and then get on our way."

She went on to explain all the things everyone would have to bring, tents, sleeping bags, flash lights, and everything in between, Nancy offered to make a list being the organized person she was. Steve watched her from across the room, her tiny hands writing each word neatly. It wasn't until Jonathan caught his eye that he looked away quickly.

Soon after he and Dustin offered to go out to pick up the pizza, he really just wanted to get some fresh air. He didn't realize how hard it would be to see her with him. He just wanted her to be happy, and if

she was happy with Jonathan, that's all that mattered to him.

They returned shortly after to find the adults and older teens at the kitchen table, and the kids at the fold up one Joyce set up in the living room. They put the pizzas on the kitchen counter, and everyone lined up to get a piece. Steve opted to sit at the kids table, feeling he fit in there better than the latter for some reason.

"So you guys ready for tomorrow?" He asked biting into a slice.

"More than you can imagine." Mike said flashing a quick smile at El, making her blush.

Steve seemed to be the only one who saw the exchange. He recognized the look, the Wheeler kid got it bad. But it seemed like the chief's daughter felt the same way.

"I hope we don't get all slashed up, like in at movie." Dustin said through bites of his pizza.

"You better have not told any of your parents about me renting you guys that movie, or it will be the last time shitheads!"

They all chuckled as Steve rolled his eyes. All the shit he does for these kids and this is the thanks he gets?

Time seemed to past too quickly, everyone laughing and talking excitedly for the week ahead. Mike and El weren't too involved in the conversation, they were too busy exchanging secret glances and small blushes. Mike was day dreaming about walking through the woods hand in hand with her. Sitting by the lake, him being distracted by her in her new bathing suit (which he was a little too excited to see). And maybe even kissing her under the bright stars. That was his favorite idea. Meanwhile she was thinking of the same things, wearing Mike's sweatshirt if the night got too cold. Sneaking out of the tents late at night to stare at the moon over the lake together. Maybe he would even kiss her again. She really wanted him to kiss her again. She looked at him and let her mind drift until she was interrupted.

"Alright kid, it's time to get going." Hopper said walking out of the

kitchen, looking weary for sleep.

"But its only nine-three-" She stopped and corrected herself, "Nine-thirty."

"Well we have a big day ahead of ourselves tomorrow, and you'll get to see your friends all week."

She sighed and got up from her chair, she guessed he was right. She said goodbye to all her friends, and thanked Mrs. Byers for having her. She saved her goodbye hug for Mike last, she liked him to be the last one she says goodbye too, always afraid that it might be the last goodbye. Dr. Owens was helping her through her anxieties, but they were still there.

"Goodnight Mike."

"Goodnight El." He said standing on the porch with her, "I'll see you tomorrow, and for a whole week we won't have to say goodbye!"

The thought made her heart warm.

She pulled him into a tight hug as she always does, and he hugged her back even tighter. It wasn't until Hopper honked the horn did they break apart and she waved goodbye walking to the truck.

El went to bed that restless with excitement, she finally was able to drift off to the thoughts of her and Mike on the camping trip. That night she didn't have any nightmares, papa didn't make any appearances and neither did the Demogorgon. It was just sweet dreams.

Alright guys, I hope you enjoyed this chapter, sorry if it was short it was more of a filler chapter, just paving the way to the camping trip. Which is starting next chapter! I'm planning on making it a few chapters long and full of Mileven moments! Thank you all so much for reading and reviewing, I couldn't appreciate it more! And if you have any specific requests for the camping trip let me know and I'll try to deliver! Love you guys!

7. Going Camping

Morning couldn't come sooner for Mike. He spent majority of the night tossing and turning, too excited to shut his racing brain off. El's beautiful image flashed behind his eyelids, her big eyes looking at him, smile shining, dimples creasing on her dewy skin. He imagined sitting by the lake with her, the sun setting on the horizon. The golden light made her look like a painting. The more he thought the harder it was for him to drift unconscious. After she first defeated the Demogorgon it was hard for him to imagine spending just one more day with her, and now he was looking forward to spending days on end in her company.

After hours of trying, sleep finally found him, and soon morning did too. Normally he would have to drag himself out of bed, especially plagued with lack of sleep but not today. He practically leaped out of his bed jittery with excitement. Mike ate his breakfast with impeccable speed causing looks of disgust from his parents and Nancy alike.

"Mike slow down, It's not like they're going to leave without us!"

He ignored his sister's annoyance and continued to shovel food into his mouth. Every second ticked by weighing on him, at this speed it felt like he was never going to get to the Byer's house.

Although not letting it show, Nancy was just as excited as her brother to start this trip. Thoughts of her being with Johnathan, in his arms made her face flush. She wouldn't let Steve get in the way of her much needed alone time with Johnathan. She could only imagine how excited Mike was about this whole camping thing, maybe she should have told El more about boys when she had the chance.

"Alright kids, remember be safe and listen to Mrs. Byers and the chief," Karen said wrapping her arms around her kids, kissing them on the head as Mike rolled his eyes.

"And remember to have fun." Their father said in his monotone voice barely looking up from his morning paper.

They heard the familiar horn beep of Johnathan's car and headed out the door.

Meanwhile Hopper stood in the kitchen, looking at his watch impatiently, "come on kid, we don't want to keep your friends waiting."

"Okay" She called out from the bathroom. She looked in the mirror again, she made sure to brush her hair out, smoothing its tight curls. El also added a touch of the lip gloss she wore to the snowball, making sure to slip the tube in her pocket before leaving the room.

"Someone's dolled up." The chief said throwing their bags in the trunk.

El's cheeks grew warm as she tried to conceal a smile.

"I don't want Mike getting any ideas." He said joking, but also a little thrown off by seeing her with make up on, even if it is only lip gloss.

El ignored his comment, partially because she didn't understand and also because her mind was too busy thinking about seeing Mike. Of course she was excited to spend time with all of her friends, but her feelings about seeing him were different. They were more intense, and seemed to over shadow all others.

The ride to the Byers was surprisingly quick and they were the last to arrive, just as Hopper predicted.

She ran out of the car to her friends who were grouped together by Joyce's car.

Mike's heart stopped when he saw her, something that happened every time their eyes met. She must have been wearing one of the new tops she bought, it was fitted to her body compared to the baggy shirts she was getting from Hopper. He also noticed a smooth sheen on her lips, it made it difficult to keep eye contact with her. It also made him want to kiss her more than usual. She could feel his gaze on her mouth, it made her nervous. He noticed her bite her lip.

She searched for the word he used at the snowball, "beautiful?"

"Always beautiful."

She gave him that smile, the smile that made him melt.

"Boys! Come help me pack the cars!" Hopper called.

Mike flashed a grin at her one more time before he and the boys went to help the chief.

Max looked at the other girl standing there with a goofy grin. She rolled her eyes and smiled at her teasingly.

"Mouth breather." El said with a chuckle as she and Max walked to join the boys.

The cars were packed and the groups split up. Johnathan and Nancy went with Joyce in her car, the boys, with the exception of Dustin who went with Steve, and the girls went with Hopper. Much to Mikes displeasure, El sat in the front seat. He was jealous of Lucas and Max sitting in the back close together, giggling and smiling at each other. He wished he was doing that with her right now, but he knew he'd have to watch how close he got to El with daddy Hopper watching. Plus, he was able to stare at her from (kind of) afar, something he enjoyed very much.

As the ride ensued Lucas and Max fell asleep on each others shoulders, something Mike and Will would give him shit for later. Will doodled mindlessly on his sketch pad he brought as El fiddled with the radio. He watched her flick her head changing the station with just her mind, he loved to see her use her powers for little things like that, he didn't know why but it made him smile. Finally, she got to a song she liked. He recognized it after a few seconds, it was "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac, he only knew because he remembered his dad bought his mom the album a few years back for Christmas. He watched El close her eyes and listen to the music, moving her head to the beat. Eleven loved music, the night of the snow ball she told him about the records Hopper shared with her and how much the beautiful sound soothed her, and how "Every Breath You Take" was her new favorite song, it was his too.

Mike spent the rest of the car ride watching her hum along to each

new song that played, getting excited at the ones she knew and voicing her opinions on the new ones she heard. He made a mental note of which songs she liked the most, formulating a plan about making her a mixtape at some point in the future.

The car ride was a little bit over an hour, so they arrived a little after eleven thirty. The lake was surrounded by dense woods besides for the small lots designated for camping. Hopper was smart for choosing to go during the week, there wasn't anyone in sight. They waited a couple of minutes for the others to arrive before beginning to unpack.

Setting up the tents and unpacking was a hefty job, but they finished quickly with the number of people they had. The boys put their boy scout knowledge to the test putting together the tents while Hopper set up a fire pit for later. The girls helped Joyce get out the sandwiches she made before leaving this morning. This reminded El of how much she loved Will's mom, she could tell everything she did was with love and kindness.

The kids sat on a picnic blanket while the adults sat on the folding chairs they brought. Hopper lit a cigarette and passed it to Joyce as he thanked her for the sandwich.

"Hey kids it's pretty hot out maybe you should test out the lake!" Joyce said as she began to collect the trash from lunch.

"Yeah I'm sweating out in this heat!" Dustin said heading to his tent to change.

"Whoa there, help Mrs. Byers' clean up, then you guys can go swim." Hopper said stepping on his cigarette butt.

They all picked up after themselves before heading to their tents to change. The girls in theirs, the young boys in theirs and Johnathan and Steve in their own. The two older boys weren't too keen on sharing a tent but it was the only arrangement that made sense. The boys of course made it down to the lake first, all of them but Mike were already jumping into the water when the girls came down. Nancy was wearing her favorite cover up and was carrying a new book she must have took from her mom's book shelf. Max and El were also with her, both of them covered in oversized tee-shirts. Max

quickly put her towel down and took her shirt off tossing it casually to the side running to join the boys in the water. El was more hesitant, she carefully pulled off her tee-shirt as Mike's breath hitched in his throat. She was wearing her new bathing suit, it was a red two piece, high up on the waist with a halter top. He did his best not to stare but he found it impossibly difficult, he's never seen her so exposed, it made his stomach tight and his hands sweaty. She gave him a cheeky smile as his face flared.

"Mike?"

"Yeah?" His voice cracked through his dry throat.

"I don't really know how to swim." She said slightly embarrassed.

"Oh well that's okay, we'll stay in the shallow part, and I'll show you." He said giving her a big smile while extending his hand.

She took it, feeling its warmth as he led her down to the water. The other members of the party splashed and swam in the deeper water, leaving Mike and El in the shallow part.

She slowly took a deep breath and stepped into the water, her hand never leaving Mikes. It was colder than she expected but it felt good against her sun heated skin. They walked until they were about waist deep until Mike stopped her.

He took her other hand, "Alright it's going to get a little deeper, but don't worry I got you." He led her deeper into the water slowly until they were about shoulder deep.

"Okay so what you're going to do is just kick your feet and move your arms around, it's called treading water."

She nodded timidly afraid to let go of his hands.

"Here I'll hold you." He hesitantly put his hands on her hips feeling his stomach coil tightly and his breathing shorten, "ready?"

El nodded at him with a smile, feeling her stomach flutter at his touch. She did as he told her to do, struggling at first but soon finding the rhythm to stay afloat.

"See you're getting it!" He exclaimed beginning to remove his hands from her waist.

"No!" She said obviously still not confident in her abilities.

"Okay," He said with that goofy smile forming on his face, "but we're not going to go any deeper just to be safe."

She nodded in agreement as she treaded in the water. Soon after she did something that shocked Mike, she moved closer to him, wrapping her legs around his waist and laid back against the water to float on her back, reminding him of the "bath". He continued to hold on to her hips, his heart beating so fast he felt like it was going to explode. He's never been this close to her, or to a girl in general, especially in a bathing suit. He looked down at her as she stared up at the clouds. He's never seen something so beautiful.

They stayed like that for a while before Will splashed them and started a splash fight between all of them. The boys continued as Max and El went to join Nancy who was tanning by Johnathan, who was taking every opportunity to photograph. El loved the feeling of the sun drying the water on her skin, and causing her hair to form into bouncy curls. To make everything better, Johnathan brought his battery powered radio. The music came out tainted by static, but El didn't care. Everything was perfect.

As the sun moved further west, Hopper came down to the lake to collect the kids for dinner. Of course they all protested, but everyone knows there's no point to fight with Hopper. El who was dozing in the sun put her shirt on and collected her towel sluggishly.

"I really wish you had your bike." She said smiling at Mike.

"Well come on I'll give you a piggy back ride!"

"A piggy what?"

"You hop on my back, wrap your legs around my waist and arms around my neck, and I carry you." He said smiling.

"Okay." She said returning the grin.

He crouched down as she gently hopped on his back. For the first time she noticed how much taller Mike had gotten since they met, he was still a little skinny for his age but he was now a couple of inches taller than her. He carried her all the way back to the camp site, listening to her giggle in his ear.

By the time they got to the tents the fire was already going as Joyce threw tinfoil wrapped potatoes on the outermost coals. They set up their picnic blanket and started to roast their hot dogs over the fire. Hopper instructed El and the others on the "right way" to do it, in between Dustin's constant wiener jokes, which induced snickers from the rest of the kids. During dinner the party sat around laughing and planning what to do in the upcoming days as Joyce and Hopper relaxed, sipping on the beer he discretely packed.

Time past quickly and soon the stars were out. The only thing illuminating the campsite was the fire, sending shadows on the tents and surrounding trees. El watched the flames with tired eyes, her head leaning on Mikes shoulder. The soft sound of Johnathan's radio filling the air, coaxing her and the others into a doze.

"Come on kids, why don't you get ready for bed we've had a long day." Joyce said in her ever motherly voice. Usually they'd beg to stay up later, but being out in the sun all day had drained them.

Will and El said goodnight to their respective parents, hugging them. The boys said goodnight to the girls before splitting up to go to their own tents. Mike and El were the last to separate.

"Hey Mike," She said stepping close to him, looking over her shoulder to Hopper who was deep in conversation with Joyce and the teenagers, "thanks for teaching me how to swim." She laid a gentle kiss on his cheek, making them both blush. She left him standing there as she retreated to her tent, only looking back to smile and say a hushed goodnight.

Both Mike and El drifted off to sleep quickly that night, thinking only of each other.

Hey guys, so sorry for such a late update, I had to put all creative projects on the back burner to focus on school, but now I have actual time to work

on this! Next update will come in the next couple days, so look out for that! I really hope you enjoyed this chapter, you all know how much I appreciate the reviews and recommendations, so please leave some if you want! Love you guys!

8. Hiking

Night passed quickly, everyone deep in a dreamless slumber. The day out in the sun truly did drain them. Hopper and Joyce remained around the campfire long after the others went to bed laughing in hushed tones about old times, sharing cigarettes and beer. Out there in the middle of nowhere they felt like teenagers again. It wasn't until past one that they decided they'd better get some sleep and retired to their tent. They were both relieved when none of the kids asked about their sleeping arrangement, nothing was going on between them of course, but deep down they wish there was. Joyce was the first woman since his divorce he genuinely liked spending time with, and since Bob's death Hopper seemed to be the only man that could make her really smile. They both knew and accepted each others baggage willingly. Once wrapped up in their sleeping bags, sleep took them too.

They both were the last to wake up, the smell of breakfast cooking wafting through the air. Climbing out of the tent they found Nancy and Johnathan cooking eggs in a pan over the fire.

"Morning you two, how did you sleep?" Nancy asked handing them both a paper plate.

"Good." They both answered returning the question to the teenagers.

"So what's on the agenda for today?" Hopper asked scooping eggs into his mouth.

"Well, I'm taking the kiddos on a hike today." Steve said throwing a hat onto his head, covering up his hair, his usual perfect coif falling flat in the humidity.

"Make sure you don't let El out of your sight." He said pointing an accusing finger at the teenager.

"I'm sure our little X-Men will be alright," He answered back, then turned to the group of preteens, "lets go."

"Be careful kids!" Joyce said yelling as they followed Steve.

They walked like chicks following a mama duck as they climbed the path. Dustin of course was up in front with Steve, making fun of his falling hair. The rest of the kids followed close behind. The boys were engaged in a heated conversation about who would win in a fight, Han Solo or Indiana Jones, as the girls giggled to each other about the idiocy of the argument. The girls fell behind a couple of paces to space themselves from the boys.

"So, you and Mike were pretty close in the water yesterday." Max said giving the other girl a light shoulder shove.

"He was just teaching me how to swim!" she felt her cheeks flare, "and what about you and Lucas, I saw you two in the car."

"I just really like him, every other guy I've met just treats me like one of the guys, I mean I know I'm not the girliest girl, but it's nice to have that kind of attention." This was the first time El saw Max really open up, "Did you ever feel like that with the guys?"

Eleven took a moment to think back over her friendship with the boys, since that rainy night in the woods Mike looked at her differently from everyone else. "No." She said feeling disappointed she couldn't make her friend feel better.

"Well I'm not surprised, the way Mike looks at you is just on a whole different level, I don't believe in all that soul mate crap, but you two are definitely the closest thing I've ever seen to it."

The thought made her smile and look at the boy walking ahead of her.

They continued to walk through the dense forest, the girls soon regrouping with the boys ahead of them. Mike fell a little behind to walk next to El giving her a smile that made her heart beat a little too fast.

"You know; Indiana Jones would definitely beat Han Solo." She said teasing him.

"Oh come on you've never even seen Indy!" He said with a laugh.

"Well from what you tell me about him, I think he would!"

"You just want to disagree with me!" He said giving her a light shove.

She gave him one back, not with her hands but with a little flick of her head and a smile.

"Oh that's it!" He laughed pushing her gently again.

She giggled, but soon it changed to a gasp feeling herself begin to trip backwards over a tree root, her instincts took over and she grabbed Mike by the shoulders. They went tumbling down a shallow ravine that lined the path. Soon their momentum slowed and Mike was pinning El to the ground. Luckily they were both uninjured and broke into a fit of laughter.

"See if I were Han and you were Indy, this is how the fight would end, with me on top and the victor."

"Oh yeah?" She quickly flipped him over with a little help with her telekinesis, so now she was on top of him.

They both chuckled again, but soon it died out. They were both staring deep into each others eyes. El could feel herself getting lost in the moment, her heart rate increasing and her stomach fluttering at the sight of him. She could hear his breath shorten as she leaned her face down closer to his. His eyes staring at her lips, and hers at his. They both leaned in tentatively, closing their eyes slowly. El could feel his breath spreading warmth across her mouth, they were so close.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, none of that! The last thing I want to have to do is to explain to your dad, aka the chief of police why would two looked like you were rolling around on the ground together and why Mike has a boner!" Steve shouted from the path above.

Mike's face went bright red as the other boys howled with laughter. El quickly rolled off of him and they climbed back up to the path. Mike stared at his feet the entire time, afraid to make eye contact with the girl. But soon he broke and looked at her, she looked back at him biting her lip to stifle a giggle, which helped his embarrassment subside. Luckily she didn't ask him about what Steve said, but she did make a mental note to ask Max or Nancy about it later. The rest of

the hike went by fast, but all Mike could think about was the kiss that almost was, although disappointed, at least now he knew she wanted to kiss him too. The thought made his heart race.

They arrived back at the campsite shortly afterward.

"Whoa, what happened to you two!" Nancy asked raising an eyebrow, looking at her brother and El.

"Oh we just fell!" He answered a little too quickly.

"Alright, well Jonathan and I are going down to the lake if you guys want to come down, probably not a bad idea to get that dirt off of you guys."

El was less afraid of the water, but still opted to hold Mike's hand. This time they all stayed in the shallow area, not wanting to exclude their friend.

"Ooo you know what would be fun!" Max asked as the all looked at her waiting for the answer, "lets play chicken!"

Max spent only a moment explaining the simple game to El before they got in position. It was Lucas and Max versus El and Mike versus Dustin and Will.

"Alright, one ground rule, no freaky mind tricks from you." Dustin said as Will climbed onto his shoulders.

Mike loved every time he could be close to El, no matter what the circumstance. Feeling her hold on to him tightly was the best feeling.

He tried his best to keep El up as he tried to push the other two boys. El kept to her word and didn't use any extra help to try and push her friends into the water.

In the end it was Will and Dustin who won, they considered themselves the dream team after their victory.

"I want a rematch tomorrow!" Lucas said splashing Dustin in the face.

"Oh yeah like you're gonna beat us!"

They spent the rest of the afternoon in the cool water, playing and laughing all together until they were called to dinner.

Everyone ate their dinner around the fire, tonight was burgers and corn, cooked right in the fire. And after a few rounds of charades the kids retired to their tents. It didn't take long for El to drift to sleep, usually her nightmares caused her to toss and turn but being surrounded by those she loved soothed her. Not long after falling asleep she felt a gentle shake of her shoulder.

"El, El, wake up." Mike's face swam in front of her, at first she thought she was dreaming but feeling his touch brought her to consciousness. It was obviously still night time, his face only there in shadows, and the soft sounds of Nancy and Max's breathing filling the tent.

"Mike, what's wrong?" She questioned, nervous about the late night visit.

"Nothing! I want to show you something." He whispered, she could see his smile, even through the dark.

"Okay." She could feel her heart flutter, the feeling just increased when she felt him grab her hand.

"Come with me!"

Alright chapter 8! Thank you all so much for your patience and all the reviews. I tried my best to do something similar to the scene from the Lion King, which was recommended a couple of times, so I hope you liked it! I left it on a little cliff hanger because I think you're all going to like the next chapter. I'm going to try to update more frequently, so thank you again for the patience. Please review and come back for chapter 9! Love you guys.

9. Together

El followed Mike out into the darkness. The only light was the glow of the full moon and the coals of the fire slowly dying. She couldn't help but think how beautiful Mike looked in the moon light. The shadows accentuating his features. She saw he was carrying a blanket rolled up under his arm peaking her interest.

"Mike, where are we going?"

"You'll see! Just wait."

They continued walking through the woods and she realized they were walking down to the lake. She loved the feeling of his hand in hers, the warmth and safety of it, and he felt the same way. Their short walk soon ended at the shore of the lake.

He turned to her, "I just wanted to spend some time, just you and me, and I thought this would be the perfect place."

The moon reflected over the calm lake as if it were a mirror. Its perfect symmetry added a sense of surrealism, as if they were in a dream.

"Beautiful." El said quietly, staring at the sky.

"Yeah, it is." He said never taking his eyes off her shining face, "Oh, and look what I brought!"

He held up Johnathan's radio, turning the knob to produce the quiet melody of some song he didn't recognize. Her face lit up at the sweet sound. She couldn't imagine a better setting to be with him. He laid out a blanket on the sand and sat down, motioning her to do the same. She sat down and took his hand again.

"Wow." He heard her whisper to herself quietly.

"What?"

"The stars, there are so much." She said staring up in wonder.

"That's what happens when you're out in the middle of nowhere, they all stand out more."

Mike loved her sense of wonder, everything was new and he loved to be the one to show her these things. She laid back to look at the night sky, and he joined her. He became acutely aware of her presence so close to him.

She suddenly turned to him, "Can you swim at night?"

"Well yeah, I mean you can swim anytime you want."

"Can we swim now?" She asked smiling.

"I don't know El, are bathing suits are all the way back at the camp and we might wake everyone up."

"We can just go in our underwear."

Before Mike could say anything more she was already up. She was wearing one of Hopper's old flannels as a night gown, which she quickly pulled off. She was wearing the bra and underwear she bought with the girls, she knew she would have been more nervous being in front of Mike like this if she had a better understanding of this whole privacy thing. She started walking toward the water until she realized Mike wasn't with her.

"Coming?" She looked back at him, he was still standing there.

"Um yeah." He said realizing he was staring at her a little too much. He couldn't imagine how red his face must have been. His stomach was coiled up looking at her like that, it made his breathing harder to do.

Mike pulled off his tee-shirt and pajama bottoms leaving him feeling exposed in just his briefs. He could only imagine how pale and lanky he looked to her right now. This beautiful and awe inspiring girl looking at him made him remember all of his flaws, which were now right out in the open. All of his negative thoughts subsided when she extended her hand and flashed him a smile.

They walked into the lake hand in hand, letting the water engulf

them. It felt warmer than it did in the day due to the night air. The steam rising over the black water made the scene even more dream like. They swam close to one another as El tried to float on her back but failed going under. She couldn't understand why she couldn't float like she did in the bath. She tried again but went under, coming up coughing.

"Here," Mike said swimming moving over to her. He put his hands underneath her, his hand on the small of her back and her neck, "better?"

She nodded looking up at the stars, taking in all of her surroundings. Mike looked down at her, the moonlight giving her an angelic glow. He noticed the goose-bumps raising on her smooth skin as the water rippled over her. He hesitantly looked over her body, taking in its image. He couldn't believe he was doing this right now. Swimming with a girl, especially El in his underwear, it was definitely a pinch me type of moment.

El felt herself getting cold in the dark water but before she could say anything Mike recommended to return back to the sand. They sat back down on the blanket, letting the night air dry them off.

"What's that?" El gasped pointing at the speck of light traveling across the sky.

"Wow! That's a shooting star," Mike said in awe, this was the first time he's ever seen one, "some people make wishes on them."

"What's your wish?" She asked looking at him with those big doe eyes that made his heart swell.

He felt his throat tighten and his mouth grow dry. He knew what his wish was, her. He looked at her again, and took a deep breath, "well, my wish would be to be with you, like this forever." His heart was beating so hard he could only imagine she could hear it too. It only increased when she took his hand in hers.

She looked at him, his eyes so bright even in the moonlight, "mine too." Was all she said.

She saw a smile start to form across his wide lips, and she saw that look in his eyes. The same look as the one from the cafeteria and the snowball, she saw his eyes flicker over her lips. They both began to lean closer to each other, every centimeter being closed with anxious tentativeness. The butterflies in El's stomach made her light headed, but in a good way. Soon they were as close as they could be without touching. She could see the nervousness on Mike's face and gave him a light smile and that was all that was needed. Their lips met and melted into one, Mike's hand traveled up to her cheek holding it tenderly as they took each other in. The kiss was longer than their previous ones, and seemed more intimate to both of them. They soon broke apart, the cool air feeling foreign on their warm lips and heated cheeks. Their eyes met again and they both let out a quiet laugh.

They both laid back on the soft blanket, Mike put his arm around her as she laid her head on his chest not wanting to be apart. El looked up at him, his eyes on the sky above, the freckles on his cheeks mirroring the stars. Pretty, no beautiful was all she could think. She could hear his soft heart beat through his bony chest, making her feel closer to someone than she could ever imagine. She closed her eyes taking in the moment, the radio playing softly near by, "These Dreams" by Heart was playing through the thin static, a song that Mike would later add to the list of songs for her mix tape. He held her close, feeling her skin against his, the feeling making him feel more elated than he thought he was capable of. After their long separation being close to her again made him feel like the luckiest person in the world, and the happiest. He knew they were young, but he felt deep down that he loved her. He loved her more than he thought he could ever love another person. Being with her, is the only place he wanted to be.

Alright guys well I hoped you liked this chapter, and I hope the kiss was up to snuff! I made it short because I kind of split the idea of what I wanted to do because I wanted this chapter to be pure mileven. So stay tuned, and please if you feel you want to leave a review, I always love hearing from you guys! Love you guys!